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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 COLOMBO 001763

SIPDIS

STATE FOR CA/VO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [CMGT](#) [ETRD](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: EXTENDING NIV VISA RECIPROCITY TO FIVE YEARS FOR SRI LANKAN PASSPORT HOLDERS SRI LANKANS APPROVE MUTUALLY-BENEFICIAL CHANGES TO VISA RECIPROCITY SCHEDULE 5 YEAR VISA FOR AMERICANS

REF A: COLOMBO 001620

1. SUMMARY: The Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) has approved a significant change to non-resident visas offered to U.S. citizens. They will implement a five year multiple entry non-resident visa, for all types of non-resident travel to Sri Lanka. The fee for this visa will be \$100. Post requests permission to reciprocate in offering 5 year multiple entry visas for most non-immigrant visa (NIV) categories and to discontinue charging a \$95 issuance fee.  
END SUMMARY

1. The GOSL Foreign Minister announced to the Ambassador official approval of the 5 year visa program for American citizens previously described in a letter to the Ambassador, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar has advised that the GSL cabinet has approved the changes to GOSL visa schedule outlined in Reftel A. The Controller of Immigration and Emigration also made the official approval announcement to Acting Consul Dave Williams has informed our Consul of these changes, which will be beneficial to American visitors.

2. American visitors who plan to stay in Sri Lanka for 30 days or less, for the purpose of tourism, will continue to receive visas upon arrival at the port of entry. These visas will be issued without any fee.

3. Under the new terms, the GSL will also issue longer term validity visas at Sri Lankan missions abroad for extended stays. The visa application fee would be set at the same cost level as the MRV fee currently collected by the USG, namely USD \$100. This type of five year multiple entry non-resident visa, would be valid for all types of non-resident travel to Sri Lanka, including business visas or extended stays in Sri Lanka of up to six months. Currently, business, student and extended stay visas, involve much higher fees and administrative obstacles for American visitors.

4. Post requests approval to reciprocate by offering in increased visa validity periods in many non-immigrant visa classes and the elimination of the \$95 issuance fee for Sri Lankans, as outlined below.

5. The following is the requested changes to the reciprocity schedule for Sri Lankan nationals:

Visa Classification	Fee	Validity Period
B-1	None	60 months
B-2	None	60 months
B-1/B-2	None	60 months
C-1	None	60 months
C-2	None	6 months
C-3	None	60 months
D	None	60 months
E-2	None	36 months
F-1	None	60 months
F-2	None	60 months
H-1B	None	36 months
H-1C	None	36 months
H-2A	None	36 months
H-2B	None	36 months
H-3	None	36 months
H-4	None	36 months
I	None	60 months
J-1	None	36 months
J-2	None	36 months
L-1	None	36 months
L-2	None	36 months
M-1	None	60 months

M-2	None	60 months
P-1	None	12 months
P-2	None	12 months
P-3	None	12 months
P-4	None	12 months
R-1	None	36 months
R-2	None	36 months

15. COMMENT: Post is anxious to have the requested would appreciate approval for these reciprocity schedule changes approved as quickly as possible. The GSL has held off announcing their visa program changes pending a decision on the part of the USG. However, Post has been pushing the GOSL to implement the newly approved visa regime for more than a year. Post has been actively engaged with the GSL on this issue for over one year and is satisfied that this proposed change is a significant improvement for American visitors. Implementation of the proposed reciprocity schedule will be viewed as a positive endorsement of the economic direction Sri Lanka is heading and should have a positive impact on overall relations. The new schedule will also benefit our bilateral relations and reduce routine visa workload.

END COMMENT

LUNSTEAD